

Faithful groups look to revive old church building

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

A historic symbol of bygone days, Echo's St. Peter's Catholic Church has sat mostly empty for more than 20 years.

Constructed in 1913, the church was de-consecrated in 1996. Echo city administrator Diane Berry said the Echo Altar Society didn't want to see the building become privately owned, which resulted in the Diocese of Baker donating it to the Fort Henrietta Foundation.

The idea was that it would become a museum. Constructed in the Portuguese Colonial Revival style, it features a distinctive stucco façade. The interior houses ornate statues and a faux marble altar.

Shortly after being gifted to the foundation, an architectural study was conducted on the building. A Kinsman Foundation grant provided funding for a new roof and some basic stabilization, Berry said. It was subsequently added to the National Register of Historic Places on Aug. 28, 1997. However, that's when most activity with the building came to a standstill.

According to Phyllis Shovelski, the Echo Kiwanis approached the Fort Henrietta Foundation last July, offering to raise money and work toward minimizing the building's degradation. The group helped raise money through an Oktoberfest celebration in 2016 and has arranged work crews and received assistance



Constructed in 1913 in the Portuguese Colonial Revival style, the old St. Peter's Catholic Church in Echo has sat empty for 20 years. The Fort Henrietta Foundation and Echo Kiwanis are hosting an open house Sunday from 2-4 p.m.

File photo

through reduced rates and in-kind labor.

Michael Duffy, Echo Kiwanis president, said local help has generously come from Dick Snow of Muleshoe Ranches and Rock Pit, Dave Smith of O So Kleen, Larry Ables of BD Ables Construction, beekeeper James Simpson of Baker City, Hermiston Glass, Lloyd Piercy, Jake Broyles, the Echo Fire Department and a score of Kiwanis volunteer laborers.

Plans for the building are up in the air, but the consensus is the Fort Henrietta Foundation and the Echo Kiwanis want to save the structure.

"People that see it, whether they are Catholic or not, they love this place," Duffy said.

The Fort Henrietta Foundation and Echo Kiwanis

are hosting an open house to hopefully increase interest in the building and maybe get some ideas on how to move forward. Organizers are also hoping to hear more about the building's history.

The open house is Sunday from 2-4 p.m. at 33208 Marble St., Echo. Refreshments will be provided by H&P Café. In addition, tours will be led by Berry, secretary of the Fort Henrietta Foundation, with assistance from Kiwanis volunteers.

Also, a volunteer work party is at 8 a.m. Saturday. Duffy invites the public to grab a pair of gloves and show up to help.

"Here we are 20 years later ... what will become of it?" Duffy pondered. "We intend to give a nudge for serious

fundraising. We want to see this go forward."

Berry said preservation and restoration should be important to everyone. For Echo, she said, the old St. Peter's church is an icon and an important symbol in telling the story of Echo's unique Azorean Portuguese, the early sheep industry and the significance of men like Joseph Cunha and his contributions to the region's history.

"We as a community feel that our history and our heritage represented by our historic buildings and sites is what makes us special and unique," Berry said.

For more information, contact Duffy at 541-303-5730, echokiwanis@centurytel.net or Joe Ramos at 509-366-3980.

LIMEY PASTOR The eye of the hurricane and gathering the tribe

I just came back from a meeting with a musician who has agreed to play for my new evening church. It is a Church of the Night that will allow a contemplative journey of prayer in sound. This musician plays the flute and many other instruments, and played the flute over me before I went for my surgery. I was told by this person that on previous occasions when they had stopped playing, others had heard a continuing playing in the room.

I am of the firm opinion that a musician is a backbone of worship, responding to the spiritual breezes that rush between us. This new musician was the offspring of the musician who had taught my son to play. I feel that I have a foundation for my new effort, as I feel about how I left my beloved friends at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with their new musician of grace. God is in the music.

Beloved brothers and sisters of Eastern Oregon, greetings and blessings. This week, I'm praying for a friend of mine who has been in the eye of the hurricane in Puerto Rico. I consider her one of my "peeps," a holy person who values the productions of the earth and its sanctity. A noble human being, Thirly Vakil is a London girl who has dedicated her life to helping the poorest people in the American Territory of Puerto Rico. She is president of Tropic Ventures Education and Research Foundation. Her website is here at: <http://eyeontherainforest.org/>

Thirly has worked in the tropical rainforest for over a decade, training the local population to carefully farm their own forest products instead of torching swathes of rare rainforest land to make bare land. The fine exotic woods are cultivated in sustainable ways and create an income stream for the people who live there that does not leave them destitute or hungry. It leaves their land as abundant as it was.

However, the voracious Hurricane Maria tore into the cultivated forest, ripping out its beauty and delicate structures. Thirly's background in the art and sciences have made her a wonderful documenter of these salvation efforts, and unfortunately also enabled her to document the shredding of nature's beauty by the chaos of powerful Atlantic weather systems. I received photographs of the devastation of her forest yesterday. I had a standing invitation to visit, but now I am going to have to wait for quite a while.

Thirly is dedicated to finding out ways by which forests may be used as assets without the need for dramatically cropping them. The fine tropical hardwood of the rainforest has great value as a product and can be cultivated without loss.

Thirly sent me pictures of her world after the hurricane struck, pictures of transcendent loss. In many ways she is a terrestrial angel. All angels weep.

Besides the crushed forest around them, the Puerto Ricans, who are American citizens, are without food and water — and help is slow in coming. It should have been made a state years ago; it has taxation but no representation. It is a neglected orphan.

I ask that you keep all these people in your prayers, donate to the people what you can and remember that we all live in a world subject to disturbance. Only God is a rock and our only true guarantee.

Amen.

Colin Brown is the former pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Boardman.



COLIN BROWN
Faith

BRIEFLY

Special service 'hymnspiration'

HERMISTON — The public is invited to an evening of singing old hymns with new and old friends.

The Hymnspiration is Sunday from 4:30-5:30 p.m. at Victory Baptist Church, 193 E. Main St. Hermiston. The gathering includes singing, food and fellowship.

For more information, call Chris Finley at 541-571-2515.

Evangelist to share at Enterprise church

ENTERPRISE — An author/evangelist will speak about forgiveness during an upcoming event at an Enterprise church.

Ordained with the Assemblies Of God Oregon District, Wes Daughenbaugh will share about his recent book, "21 Ways to Forgive." The free event is Saturday from 6:30-8 p.m. at Abundant

Life Assembly, 207 E. Main St., Enterprise.

For more information, contact Micah Agnew at abundantlifeassembly@gmail.com, 541-426-3752 or visit www.facebook.com/abundantlifeag. The author's website is www.christsaffection.com.

Aglow celebrates Feast of Tabernacles

WALLA WALLA — Everyone is invited to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles at a Shabbat potluck dinner sponsored by the Walla Walla Aglow Community Lighthouse.

Nancy Hubbard will share about the Jewish fall feasts during the event. It is Friday, Oct. 6 at 6 p.m. at 711 Carrie St., Walla Walla. A party atmosphere, the event also features Jewish music and shofar blowing. Those who plan to attend may bring a dish to share. In addition,

if able, RSVP by calling 509-876-1668.

Aglow, which started in 1967, is an international organization that seeks to minister to its members and share God's word in the community. In addition to the regular monthly meetings, there are weekly prayer groups and Bible studies.

For more information, call Kathy Owsley at 509-540-2684, Lora Sykes at 509-540-0212 or visit www.ecwaglow.com.

Church hosts death and dying conversation

PENDLETON — Death is part of the human experience — everyone has experienced loss, and all of us will die one day. Yet conversations about death and dying are difficult and often avoided even with closest family members and friends.

As part of the Oregon Humanities' statewide Talking

about Dying initiative, facilitator Holly Pruett will host a conversation on the topic of "Talking About Dying." The free event is Monday, Oct. 9 at 7 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 201 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton.

"Talking About Dying" discussions provide Oregonians with an opportunity to reflect on what stories and influences shape their thinking about death and dying. In addition, they will hear different perspectives and ideas from fellow community members. Participants will explore essential questions about death and dying and will gain a strengthened sense of community support. A resource list with tools and information to help them consider how to shape a meaningful approach to death and dying will be available.

For more information, contact, 541-276-7681 or fpcc@pendletonpresbyterian.com.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church LCMC
Sunday worship at 11:00 AM
420 Locust St. • Boardman, OR
541-481-6132
Colin Brown, Pastor

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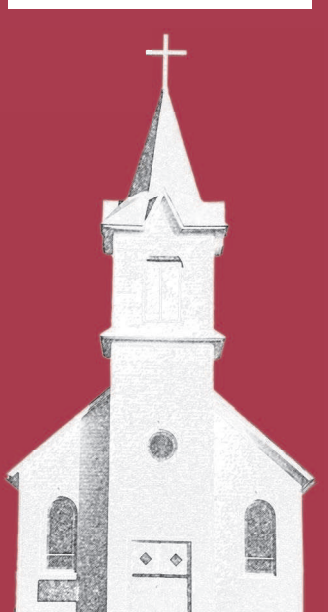
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